

The longer I serve in public life, in many ways, the more idealistic I become, but I see day-in and day-out that the world is composed of builders, wreckers, and idlers. And most people in politics are either builders or wreckers. All of you are, by nature, instinct, training, and will, builders. The country and the world needs its builders, those with imagination and hope and heart who understand that with all the differences that exist in the world, our common humanity and our common relationship to the eternal and to our earthly home is far, far more important.

In the end, that is what we have honored tonight, and America is in your debt. Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:55 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Renzo Piano, 1998 Pritzker Architecture Prize laureate; Vincent J. Scully, Jr., Sterling professor emeritus, Yale University; J. Carter Brown, chairman, Pritzker Prize jury; and Jay A. Pritzker, president, Hyatt Foundation, and his wife, Cindy.

Remarks on the Nominations of Bill Richardson To Be Secretary of Energy and Richard C. Holbrooke To Be United Nations Ambassador and an Exchange With Reporters

June 18, 1998

The President. Senator Bingaman and Congressman Becerra, ladies and gentlemen, I welcome you all here today as I announce my intent to nominate Ambassador Bill Richardson to become our Secretary of Energy, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke to assume the portfolio of America's Representative to the United Nations. I'm especially pleased that their families could join me and the Vice President and, as you can see, our entire national security team.

Over the last 2 years, Bill Richardson's experience, energy, and tenacity have made a real difference in advancing our interests in the United Nations and around the world. With diplomatic skills honed in one of the most diverse congressional districts in our country, negotiating ability tested in some of the toughest hot spots on our planet, and a personal touch evidenced from his first day on the job, Bill Richardson has brought creativity and drive to our leadership at the U.N.

He has served the Secretary of State and me by tackling some of the toughest negotiating challenges from the Congo to Zaire to Afghanistan. He helped to rally the international community to speak and act as one in the crisis in Iraq. Today, the international inspectors are back on the job, working to end Iraq's nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons threat, thanks in no small measure to his efforts. He has been a vigorous and articulate proponent of our en-

gagement around the world and the importance of leveraging that engagement by living up to our United Nations obligations.

In short, if there's one word that comes to mind when I think of Bill Richardson, it really is "energy." But that is hardly the only reason I am appointing him to this job. [Laughter] For 14 years representing New Mexico, an energy-rich State that is home to two of our national Department of Energy labs, and his long service as an active member of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, he has gotten extensive, firsthand experience in issues ranging from deregulating the oil and gas industries, to promoting alternative sources of energy, to ensuring that energy development meets tough standards of environmental safety. I thank him for his willingness to serve.

Let me also say that Secretary Pena has left a very impressive legacy upon which to build. I appreciate his 5 years of service to our Nation as both Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Energy, where he surprised, I might say, even his greatest admirers with the speed with which he mastered the incredible complex issues of the Department and the leadership he demonstrated in supporting the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, in coming out with an electricity deregulation plan that will save consumers \$20 billion a year, in helping to open all kinds of opportunities for energy conservation

and a clean energy future for America. Let me also thank him as Secretary of Transportation for his service there in advancing mass transit more than at any point in recent history and for opening up our air commerce with 40 other nations.

With Congress' support, Bill Richardson will do his part now to secure our energy future, at a time when that is inextricably bound up with our obligation as Americans to do our part to deal with the problem of climate change and our obligations as Americans to build a secure future for our country that allows economic growth and protection of the planet.

I believe that this challenge will require the greatest energy from our labs, from our scientists and technology, from an Energy Department that can work clearly with the private sector on what plainly will be one of America's most important priorities for years and years to come.

Ambassador Holbrooke, my new United Nations designate, is already a familiar face all around the globe. His remarkable diplomacy in Bosnia helped to stop the bloodshed, and at the talks in Dayton, the force of his determination was a key to securing peace, restoring hope, and saving lives. His ongoing service in the Balkan region has helped to keep Bosnia's peace on track through some difficult moments.

He has helped to advance our efforts to break the stalemate in Cyprus, and he's worked to defuse the alarming tensions and violence still brewing in Kosovo. His expertise rests on an outstanding career of diplomatic service, from his early days as one of the youngest ever Assistant Secretaries of State for Asia, an area where he has continued to be actively involved and which is very important today. Then he worked as my Ambassador to Germany and as Assistant Secretary of State for Europe.

His long experience in the private sector has given him a keen eye for the bottom line, economically and politically. He will help us to shape a U.N. that is leaner, more efficient, better equipped, that fulfills the best ideals of its founders and meets the challenges of the 21st century.

Ambassador Holbrooke understands, as do all the members of our national security team, the important role the United Nations can play in supporting our goals around the world, pursuing peace and security, promoting human rights, fighting drugs and crime, helping people lift

themselves from poverty to dignity and prosperity. Our Nation will always be prepared to act alone if necessary, but joining our strength with our U.N. partners, we maximize our reach and magnify our effectiveness while sharing costs and risks.

In a world where developments beyond our borders have dramatic implications within them, from rogue states seeking nuclear weapons and chemical and biological weapons to pollution corroding the atmosphere, international cooperation is clearly more important than ever. I urge Congress to send me legislation, therefore, without unrelated issues, to live up to our legacy of leadership and pay our debt to the United Nations.

In closing, let me say that the Vice President and I feel very fortunate every day to have such a strong national security team, men and women of vision, of judgment, of commitment. We have worked closely together to make sure that our Nation remains the world's leading force for peace and freedom, for prosperity and security.

The line-up I announce today maintains that exceptional standard. I thank all of them for their willingness to serve. I especially thank Ambassador Holbrooke and Ambassador Richardson for their willingness to take on these important new tasks.

And now, I'd like to turn the floor over to them.

[At this point, Secretary-designate Richardson and Ambassador Holbrooke thanked the President and made brief remarks.]

Rapprochement With Iran

Q. Mr. President, are you softening your policy toward Iran? Are you softening your policy toward Iran? Did you find a new rapprochement?

The President. I agree with the remarks made yesterday by Secretary Albright. We talked about them extensively before she made her speech. What we want is a genuine reconciliation with Iran based on mutuality and reciprocity and a sense that the Iranians are prepared to move away from support of terrorism and distribution of dangerous weapons, opposition to the peace process.

We appreciate the comments that were made by the President several months ago, and we are exploring what the future might hold. We have not changed our principles, our ideas, or

our objectives. We believe Iran is changing in a positive way, and we want to support that.

Q. Are you contemplating a gesture, sir?

The President. I think Secretary Albright's words should stand for themselves right now. I thought it was a fine speech and an important one.

Tobacco Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you have any plans to resurrect tobacco, perhaps in the House? And how?

The President. Well, yesterday many of the Republican Senators whom I called—and I talked to 10 of them yesterday—said that they had been approached by Senator Lott about the prospect of putting some sort of special group together of 4 Republicans and 4 Democrats and maybe having them try just in a matter of a few days to come up with a bill they thought would actually not only pass the Senate but could be written into law. And if that's a good-faith effort they're willing to make, that's certainly one option that I would consider.

But I don't intend to continue—to stop fighting for this. I think it's obvious to everybody in the world what happened. This bill was voted out of the committee 19 to 1. Some of the people who voted for it in the Republican caucus then did not vote for it on the floor, even though every major amendment which was adopted to the bill was sponsored by a Republican Senator. And I think it's pretty clear what happened.

They may believe that the \$40 million in advertising by the tobacco companies changed public opinion irrevocably and permanently and therefore it's safe to walk away from the biggest public health obligation that this country has today. I don't believe that.

But even if the politics have changed, the merits haven't. One more day will pass today when 3,000 more children will start to smoke even though it's illegal to sell them cigarettes, and 1,000 of them will have their lives shortened because of it. And for us to sit here and do nothing in the face of evidence which has been mounting during this debate, even in the Minnesota case, during this debate, gave the freshest and in some cases the most vivid documentary evidence of all from the tobacco companies themselves that they've known about the addictive qualities of nicotine for years and that they have deliberately marketed cigarettes to children

for years, even though they knew it was against the law to do it, because they needed what they call "replacement smokers."

Now, the bill is simple in its outline and clear in its objectives. And in terms of the complications of it, many of those were added by the people who now are criticizing it.

So, on balance, I think the case is still so overwhelming that we ought to keep working on it, and I'm prepared—you know, I've been working on this for years. When we started, most people didn't think we'd get as far as we have, and I don't think that we intend to stop until we prevail. And sooner or later we will, because it's the right thing to do.

Q. Sir, how will you finance this child care initiative and other things that were contained in that bill without ruining the budget?

The President. We can only finance—we can finance that part of it which is within our own budget, and that part of it which was dedicated to—which would had to have been financed by the States and which was within a menu of things that we supported that the States could spend it on won't be financed unless the States get the money some other way. And I think that's unfortunate, because I think that would be a good expenditure of some of the money.

Keep in mind, most of the Federal money was designed to be spent on—directly on health care—on medical research, on smoking cessation programs, on programs designed to deal with the consequences of the health problems that are directly related to smoking in this country. And that was, of course, a part of the Senate's decision in killing it.

I think it's important to point out also that there were—that this bill is temporarily dead because of the unusual rule of the Senate that requires 60 percent, not 51 percent, of the Senate to pass on any bill other than the budget if somebody objects to it. So for all the \$40 million in spending—and as reported in the paper today, all the commitment to run the same ads all over again in November to protect the Republican Members who voted with them—they still could only muster 43 votes. And two of those votes were people who wanted a better provision for the tobacco farmers and essentially supported the bill.

So, essentially, what you've got is 41 people denying the American people and denying the huge majority of the United States Senate, including a number of Republicans, the right to

pass a tobacco bill and ask the House to do the same to protect our children. That's not a long way from success. And that means that each and every one of the members of the Republican caucus who voted for that was in a way personally responsible for the death of the bill.

It's not all—it's dead today. It may not be dead tomorrow. And it's not dead over the long run because the public health need is great.

I've never quit on anything this important in my life, and I don't intend to stop now. There are too many futures riding on it, and I think in the end we will prevail.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mohammad Khatami of Iran.

Remarks Following Discussions With Religious Leaders

June 18, 1998

Thank you very much, Madam Secretary, to the Members of Congress who are here, and the religious leaders, especially to Rabbi Schneier, Archbishop McCarrick, Reverend Argue. I thank all of you for your devotion to religious liberty and to the proposition that America's advocacy of freedom should, indeed must, include our advocacy of religious liberty.

I'd like to say a special word of thanks to John Shattuck, our Assistant Secretary of State, who has worked so hard to promote human rights around the world and whom, I hope, will soon be moving on to other important responsibilities for the United States. John, thank you very, very much for doing a great job. Sandy Berger and Madeleine and I rely on you a lot, and we hope you'll have another good run soon.

I'd also like to say a special word of appreciation to Reverend Argue, Archbishop McCarrick, and Rabbi Schneier for leading a delegation to China on a mission that grew out of my meeting with President Jiang last fall. In their discussions with Chinese Government leaders and religious groups of all kinds, they were our forceful advocates for religious liberty. Their visit helped to make the Chinese people aware of the fundamental importance of this issue, not simply to the American Government but to the American people.

We have just met to discuss their trip, and I have received from them a very impressive report of their activities, replete with their specific recommendations about where we go from here. And their insights will certainly have a big influence on my activities and conversations as I prepare to embark for China.

I also want to thank all the religious leaders who have joined us here today who have been part of our advisory process. We welcome the recent release from prison of two key Chinese religious leaders, Gao Feng and Bishop Zeng Jingmu, as well as China's announcement that it intends to sign the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, with its guarantees of freedom of thought and religion. But Chinese Christians, Muslims, and Buddhists remain imprisoned for their religious activities, including in Tibet, and other believers face harassment.

Therefore, when in China, I will speak as clearly as I can about human rights and religious freedom. Our message is clear: We in the United States believe that all governments everywhere should ensure fundamental rights, including the right of people to worship when and where they choose. We believe that China should resume talks with the Dalai Lama. We believe that prisoners of conscience should be released.

I am convinced that dealing directly with the Chinese on these issues is the best way to make a difference, and making a difference is in the end what matters. I am also convinced, as I told President Jiang here both privately and in our press conference, that China will be more stable, will grow stronger, will acquire more influence in the world in direct proportion to the extent to which it recognizes liberties of all kinds and especially religious liberty.

Of course, we all know that the freedom to follow one's personal beliefs, to worship as one chooses, is at the core of what it means to